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From the Vault: The Strongest Man to Walk the Earth

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Postings from the Inter-webs

What do you do to stay healthy?

BEN LONGNECKER '17

"For me, maintaining a healthy lifestyle adds a degree of consistency to the chaotic rush of college. Attempting to balance everything (academics, clubs, friends, sleep, etc.) can be stressful. Though by exercising every day and eating healthy, I add something in my routine that is always under my control. In addition, Furman makes this even easier for students to sustain their healthy habits by having a gym open 17 hours a day, a dining hall that always carries healthy options, and the most beautiful running campus in America."

ELIZABETH STOKES '14

"I am doing my best to maintain a healthy lifestyle by realizing I can take control of my own health. I make a point to enjoy some of the local nature trails, the Swamp Rabbit, the Furman lake, multiple dog parks in the area, and downtown Greenville. I try to enjoy time to myself after work by maintaining healthy hobbies and activities."

CANDLER REYNOLDS '17

"As seniors, we have the privilege of driving to our classes, but Furman's healthy initiatives across campus have really empowered me to make small changes that encourage healthy habits. In light of this, I am committing to walking to class every day ... besides, Furman is pretty beautiful and I want to savor every last minute."



The Strongest Man to Walk the Earth

Paul Anderson once recorded a back lift of 6,270 pounds (the weight of a limousine).

BY RON WAGNER '93

On a Gorky Park stage in the summer of 1955, a great Soviet strongman delights a crowd of 15,000 with an Olympic record-tying overhead press of 330 pounds.

Moments later, the Moscow throno scoffs when workers add 72.5 pounds to the weight bar. Feet spaced far apart to accommodate his 36-inch thighs, Paul Anderson strides confidently on stage. A fresh qualifier for the U.S. weightlifting team, he wears no official uniform. The team's manager did not have one to fit him.

With little pause, he grasps the bar and does what no man before has: overhead pressing 402.5 pounds. As the weight thunders back onto the stage, the crowd stands in stunned silence for a second. Then there is a roar. The Russians dub Anderson "chudo priroty," a wonder of nature.

Four years before, Anderson was a freshman on the Furman

football team when he and teammate **Bob Snead '54** covertly assembled a weightlifting station in a room above the gymnasium on the downtown campus. At the time, weightlifting was frowned upon by coaches. So Anderson, Snead and a few others had to sneak around.

In that room, Anderson astounded his classmates with his natural gift. A passion was sparked that would propel him to international fame. Homesick, he left Furman after his freshman year, moving in with his parents in Elizabethton, Tennessee, where he began competing in local weightlifting competitions.

At his peak, Anderson weighed 390 pounds and is credited with a 1,200-pound squat, a 628-pound bench press, a 1,000-pound deadlift, and a 380-pound one-arm side press. All are weights that have remained virtually unattainable by natural professional lifters.

In 1957, he earned a spot in *The Guinness Book of World Records* with a 6,270-pound back lift (lifted off trestles), which writers called "the greatest weight ever lifted by a human being." By many, Anderson has been called the strongest man to walk the planet.

Anderson's faith was as strong as his trunk-shaped body. In 1961, he and his wife, Glenda, founded the Paul Anderson Youth Home for troubled children in Vidalia, Georgia. For decades he traveled the country to preach the gospel and perform feats of strength to raise money for the home.

Anderson died in 1994. A life-sized statue of him hoisting a loaded bar over his head is the centerpiece of Paul Anderson Park in his hometown of Toccoa, Georgia, and the Paul Anderson Youth Home is still in operation. ●